

From Taking Notice To Taking Action

Tips for Effective Advocates

Iowans with Disabilities in Action



“It is easy to sit up & take notice. What is difficult is getting up and taking action!”

*Honore de Balzac,
writer*

“We in America are not a government of the majority. We are a government of the majority who participate.”

Thomas Jefferson



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Tips for Effective Advocates



YOU

Lobby

Actual Voters

Registered Voters

Eligible Voters

Total Population

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Tips for Effective Advocates

Barriers to Active Participation

☒ Knowledge

☒ Confidence

☒ Access



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Tips for Effective Advocates

Where Do I Begin?

- ✓ Identify Your Cause
- ✓ Do Your Homework
- ✓ Know your Elected Officials
- ✓ Build Support for Your Cause
- ✓ Communicate

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Tips for Effective Advocates

The most important story is yours:

✓ **Be Clear & Concise**

✓ **Two Minute Rule**

✓ **Tell a Story**

✓ **Ask for Action**

✓ **Get to the Point**

✓ **Keep it Simple**

idaction
We're counting on you

Message Worksheet

Follow these tips when talking or writing to your elected officials.

1. **Be Polite.** Treat policy makers with respect, even if they don't agree with you.
2. **Be Persistent but Patient.** Policy change takes time. Don't give up.
3. **Practice and Prepare.** Practice talking to your legislator - it really does help. Think about what you want to say before you meet with, write or call them.
4. **Be Clear.** Stick to a simple and clear message and keep with it. Get to the point quickly and don't forget to let them know what you want them to do.
5. **Be Personal.** These real life examples mean a lot to legislators. It helps them look at issues differently - and put a human face on them.
6. **Be Honest.** Never lie. You want to be a reliable source of information to your policy makers.

Your Issue/Story (in 50 words or less):

What do you want them to do: (in 50 words or less):

Three key points to make:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

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Tips for Effective Advocates

How Do I Talk To My Elected Official?

Briefly identify your issue

- Introduce yourself
- Put the issue into context – tell a story
- Ask for something
- Answer & ask questions
- Ask for your elected official's position
- Listen carefully
- Thank them for their time and consideration
- Be assertive, but polite
- Follow-Up

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Tips for Effective Advocates

Common Mistakes to Avoid

- Avoid speaking in broad terms
- Never guess or lie
- Don't be too political – focus on the policy
- Never threaten
- Don't make promises you can't keep
- Never criticize other elected officials or organizations
- Keep it simple

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Tips for Effective Advocates

Ideas to Get Started: Phone

Decide what type of advocacy best suites
YOUR personality and comfort level:

☒ **Phone**

☒ **Writing**

☒ **Face to Face**

☒ **Organizing Others**

PHONE IDEAS

- Call your elected officials.
- Call friends, family and others you know and encourage them to call, write, or meet with their legislators.
- Call Governor Branstad and encourage him to help solve the problem. 515.281.5211

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Tips for Effective Advocates

Ideas to Get Started: Writing

Decide what type of advocacy best suites
YOUR personality and comfort level:

- ☒ Phone
- ☒ **Writing**
- ☒ Face to Face
- ☒ Organizing Others

WRITING IDEAS

- Write a letter or e-mail your elected officials.
- Write a Letter to the Editor!
The Des Moines Register
Editorial Writers
PO Box 957
Des Moines, Iowa 50306

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Tips for Effective Advocates

Ideas to Get Started: Face to Face

Decide what type of advocacy best suites
YOUR personality and comfort level:

- ☒ Phone
- ☒ Writing
- ☒ **Face to Face**
- ☒ Organizing Others

FACE TO FACE IDEAS

Attend local legislator forums. A complete list can be found at www.infonetiowa.com.

Invite elected officials to local events, open houses Plan a discussion with friends or just have them over for a cup of coffee.

Visit the Capitol, the Courthouse or City Hall!

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Tips for Effective Advocates

Ideas to Get Started: Organizing Others



Decide what type of advocacy best suites
YOUR personality and comfort level:

- ☒ Phone
- ☒ Writing
- ☒ Face to Face
- ☒ **Organizing Others**

ORGANIZING OTHERS

Talk to your friends, family and others to build support. Ask them to call, write, or contact their elected officials.

Speak to community and civic groups.

Organize informational meetings and invite others you know.

Get others to attend the local legislative forums.

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Tips for Effective Advocates

Helpful Advocacy Tools



ID Action - www.idaction.org

- Advocacy Toolkit
- Personal Story Videos
- Events
- ID Action Grants

Contact us:

Phone: 866.432.2846

Email: contactus@idaction.org

infoNET - www.infonetiowa.com

- Bi-weekly and interim legislative news reports geared toward persons with disabilities
- Legislative Public Forum List (updated weekly)

Contact us:

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Email: info@idaction.org

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Helpful Advocacy Tools



Advocacy University - www.advocacyuniversity.com

- Education and Training Resources
- Barrier Removal

Iowa Disability Vote Coalition - www.idaction.org/vote

- Candidate/Party Information
- Voter Information
- Voter Training
- Community Organizing

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